sydney sculpture walk

TOUCH

ART

WALK

CITY OF SYDNEY

The artworks have been commissioned on a 10-year basis with ten projects by Debra Phillips, Robyn Backen, Bronwyn Oliver, Janet Laurence & Jisuk Han, Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, Nigel Helyer, Anne Graham, Brenda L. Croft, Fiona Hall and the Japanese artist Kimio Tsuchiya to be completed by the Olympics. Further commissioning of artists will continue through 2001.

Each artwork is site-specific and created directly in response to its location being developed from a commissioning brief that required artists to contribute in a dynamic way to an appreciation and understanding of the city`s environment and character. The artworks deal with issues such as memory, history, identity, language and the environment and utilise a diverse range of materials including sandstone, glass, marble, solar power, steel, copper, terrazzo, fibre-optic lighting, fog, trees, sound and marine buoys.

In drawing people through the streets and plazas, parks and harbour-side promenades, civic and cultural precincts the Sculpture Walk aims to provide a uniquely artistic view and experience of the city to visitors and Sydneysiders alike.

Nigel Helyer

Debra Phillips

Robyn Backen

Janet Laurence & Jisuk Han

Bronwyn Oliver

Brenda L. Croft

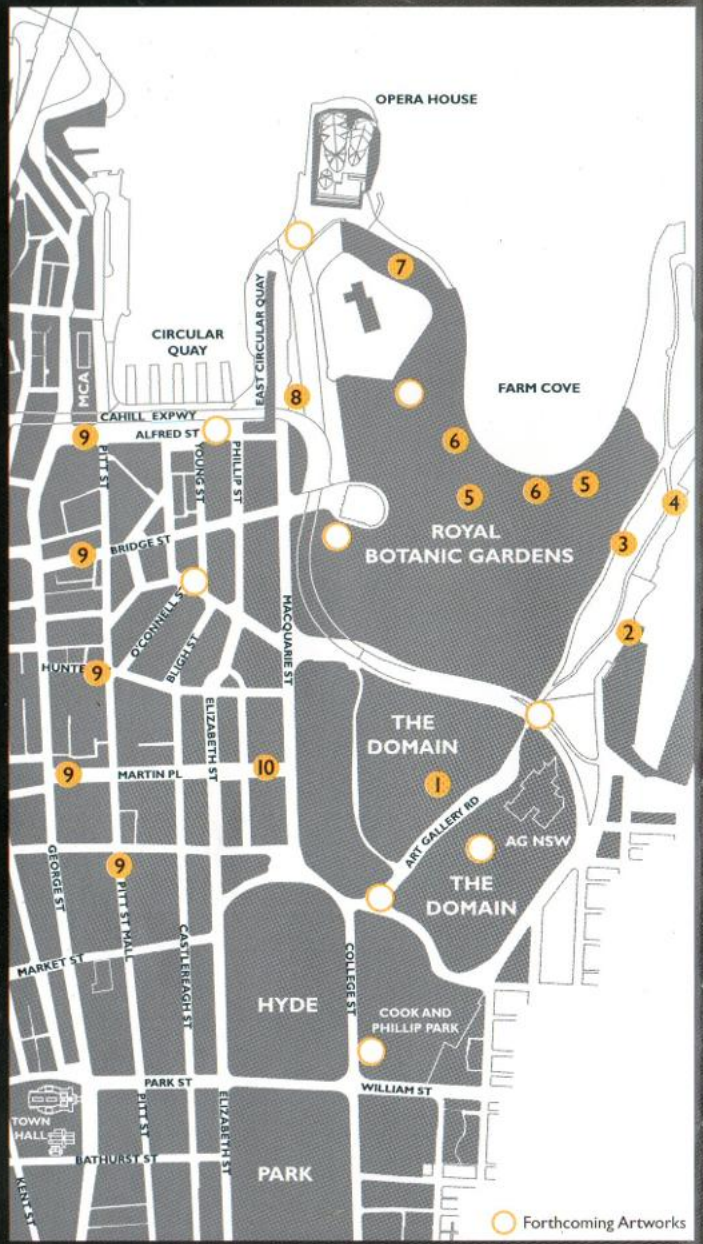
Fiona Hall

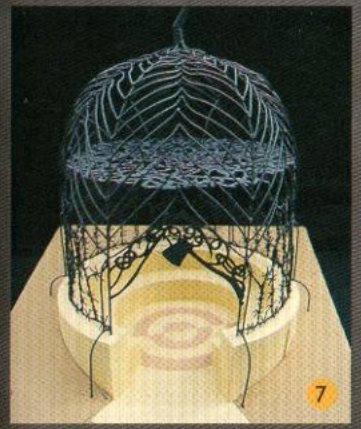
Kimio Tsuchiya

Lynne Roberts-Goodwin

Anne Graham

ART YOU CAN TOUCH



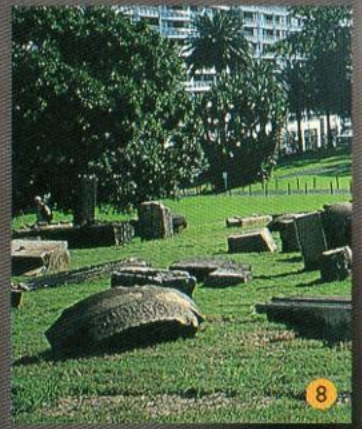


Fiona Hall
Folly for Mrs Macquarie
Lawn 62, Botanic Gardens

Lachlan Macquarie and his wife governed in Sydney from 1810 to 1821. They arrived with a pattern-book for buildings in the Neo-Classical style and a desire to transform the colony. A sketch from the period indicates that Mrs Macquarie had a folly constructed.

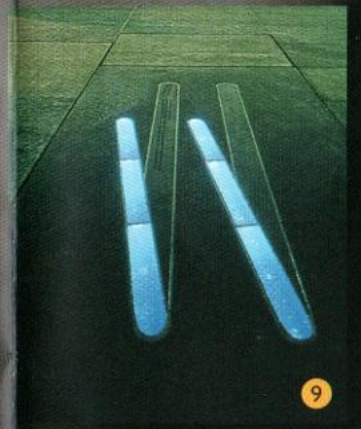
The design elements of the artwork echo those early aspirations but also remind us that there was much folly in the way Britain colonised Australia. The domed roof of Norfolk Island pine fronds for example refers to the colonists' regard for this tree. However the pines' brittle timber dashed hopes that it would make excellent ships' masts.

The ceiling is of the bones and skulls of animals that once lived in this area, while 'Gothic windows' represent the barbed wire that divided up the land.



Kimio Tsuchiya
Memory is Creation Without End
Tarpeian Way, Macquarie Street

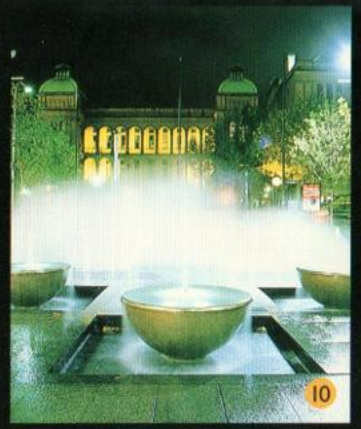
This spiral of sandstone blocks embedded into the Tarpeian Way is of relics from demolished buildings and structures such as the Pyrmont Bridge. Each piece of stone, carved by stonemasons long ago and now darkened with age, testifies to their lost function and to their loss from the collective memory. Once quarried for the city's early sandstone buildings and to provide fill for the creation of Circular Quay the Tarpeian Way is now but a thin veneer of earth covering the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. *Memory is Creation Without End* symbolises the circular connection of past, present and future. In salvaging and reconfiguring the stones into this spiral unification of sculpture and landscape the artist endows them with new life, meaning and memory.



Lynne Roberts-Goodwin
Tankstream – into the head of the cove….
City Streets

The artwork is located in five separate sites from Alfred Street to Pitt Street Mall marking the existence of the historic Tank Stream bubbling below the city streets. The movement of a subterranean stream is alluded to by the glass modules which ripple blue light at night and the steel rods with accompanying text. Captain Watkin Tench, Captain of the Marines of the First Settlers at Port Jackson, wrote about the selection of Sydney Cove as the first site of settlement, recorded the rise and flow of the stream and his vision of grandeur of the settlement.

Tankstream – into the head of the cove…. celebrates this stream which commenced in marshes near Pitt Street Mall, its importance in the founding of the city and its continued survival under the city streets finally flowing into the harbour at Circular Quay.

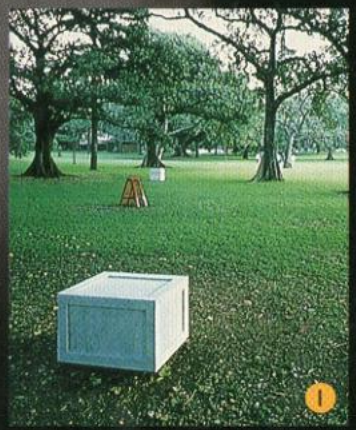


Anne Graham
Passage
Martin Place, Macquarie Street

The earliest recorded dwellings on this site are two Georgian cottages, documented by Joseph Fowles in his book 'Sydney in 1848'. The walls of the original houses are recalled by the inlaid black granite paving and stainless steel grille floorplan. Rising every ten minutes from the grilles a mist creates the ghostly spaces once occupied by previous residents. The three bronze bowls, reflection pools and fountains represent Georgian washrooms; the shape of the bowl is inspired by The Improved Sponging Pan, with turnover rim to prevent splashing, from James McEwan & Co.'s 'Illustrated Catalogue'. Georgian washrooms were placed at the back of the house and water would have been carried up from the Tank Stream for use in the kitchen and laundry.

sydney sculpture walk

sydney sculpture walk

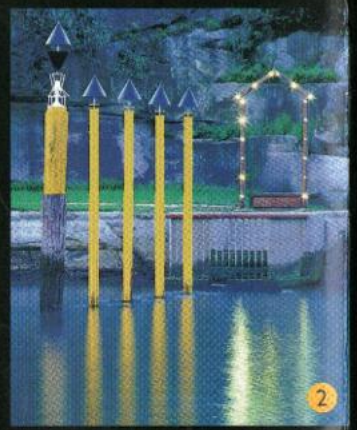


Debra Phillips
Viva Voce
Speakers Corner, Domain

Public oratory was introduced to the Domain in 1878, establishing a location and a precedent for the direct exchange of ideas and opinions amongst the city`s populace.

The subsequent tradition of regular Sunday afternoon debate under the Moreton Bay Fig trees – at points in history involving notable identities and crowds of thousands – marks Speakers Corner as both the living voice and democratic heart of the city.

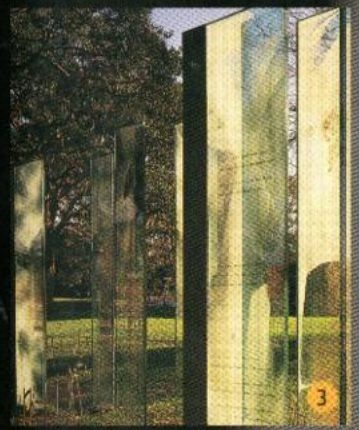
Viva Voce, a red stepladder and five marble soapboxes arranged amongst the trees at Speakers Corner, pays tribute to this history and celebrates the continuing vitality and importance of free speech and public debate.



Robyn Backen
The Archaeology of Bathing
Woolloomooloo Bay, Domain

Woolloomooloo Bay has a long association with bathing. Cattigal people bathed here prior to and after European settlement and it is along this shore that Sydney`s first baths were built. Between 1833 and 1955 this part of the bay was the site of four separate ladies bathing establishments, including Mrs Biggs` Ladies Baths and the Domain Baths for Ladies.

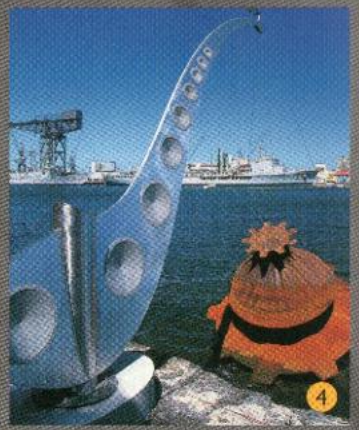
The artwork traces elements of the former Domain Baths for Ladies – a floating jetty and marine piles evoke the memory of the boardwalk and mark tidal change – a concrete path defines the poolside deck and changing cubicles – a bathing machine is evoked by the stair, cage and portal frame, reflecting on the closeted space of modesty associated with the early days of bathing – lights in the portal frame signal morse code across the bay.



Janet Laurence & Jisuk Han
Veil of Trees
Lawson Precinct, Domain

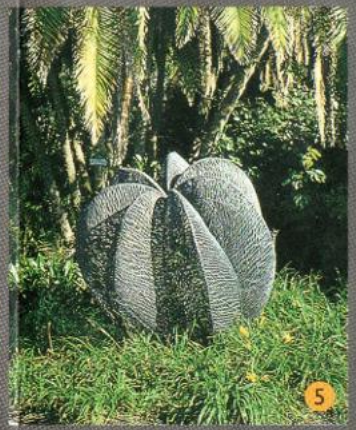
Amidst translucent glass and steel panels a ribbon of one hundred Red Forest gums – eucalyptus tereticornis – have been planted, each tree grown from the seed of the Red Forest gums which existed prior to European settlement. Along with clumps of native grasses these trees reflect the botanical history of the Domain and at the same time regenerate species indigenous to the area.

With the play of light on the glass panels a passage of reflection is created, a space where memory is gathered. Memory is embodied within each glass panel – traces of ash, minerals and seeds of indigenous trees are enclosed; inscribed on the surface are excerpts of texts and poetry by Australian authors, selected for their evocation of the nature of the bush.



Nigel Helyer
Dual Nature
Woolloomooloo Bay

These surreal, steel hybrids of marine, industrial and natural forms cling to the shoreline of Woolloomooloo Bay like abandoned hulks reflecting the maritime, naval and cultural history of the site. Partly submerged at high tide the water-based sculptures are intended to act as natural reverberation chambers. These ambient sounds mix with the solar powered, pre-recorded soundscape of the land-based sculptures. Like holding a sea shell to ones ear to hear the distant roar of the surf *Dual Nature* emits its stories about the history of shipping, people and events at the Bay.



Bronwyn Oliver
Palm and Magnolia
Farm Cove, Botanic Gardens

Before European settlement this part of the foreshore was a mudflat. Seed and flotsam were washed up by the waves. Ships arrived on the tide in 1788 and crops were planted nearby soon afterwards – on the site that became known as First Farm. This area has been dedicated ever since to the introduction and propagation of plants reflecting the changing cultural and horticultural needs of the day.

These overscaled, seedlike sculptures nestled close by to each other beneath a palm and a magnolia tree are intended to symbolise elemental forms washed up by the tide, blown by the wind, eroded by water and laden with the potential for vigour and transformation.

Brenda L. Croft
Wuganmagulya (Farm Cove)
Farm Cove, Botanic Gardens

The artwork commemorates the historical and contemporary importance of Indigenous people in this part of Australia. In two sections of the pathway terrazzo and stained concrete depict figures from Sydney rock carvings, some of which no longer exist. Etched in red along the pathway kerb are names of women and men, places, animals, tools, and rituals from the many clans and language groups of Indigenous people in the Sydney area.

Wuganmagulya (Farm Cove) pays homage to the Yura (original clans of the site) and to the clans who travelled great distances to attend ceremonies at Sydney Cove. It also acknowledges recent Indigenous history such as the 1988 Long March of Peace, Justice and Hope.

Up to twenty contemporary artworks are being specially commissioned from leading Australian and international artists to form a circuit through the heart of the city – from the new Cook and Phillip Park through the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain, East Circular Quay and the city streets to Hyde Park.

The Sydney Sculpture Walk is a major City of Sydney initiative for the 2000 Olympics and the 2001 Centenary of Federation.

A feature of the Olympic Arts Festival the Sculpture Walk also endows the City with a significant artistic legacy for future generations of residents, workers and visitors. Through its curatorial approach the Sculpture Walk sets an Australian benchmark in the commissioning of new civic art.

For more information call City Info 9265 9007 or visit www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or write Curator Sydney Open Museum, City of Sydney, GPO Box 1591, Sydney NSW 2001.

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney
Lend Lease
Australia Council
Grocon